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United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service and Your State Forester
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Make Campfires Safe!

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"MAKE CAMPFIRES SAFE"

The campfire is a friend to us when carefully used. It will keep us warm, cook our food, dry our clothes, and add a flickering light of friendship to the night. Most people are careful with campfires. They follow the laws. They build their fires in the right places and at the right times, keep them small, and put them out before they leave.

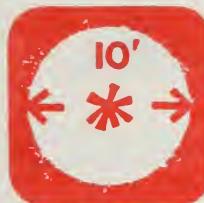
An unattended campfire or sparks from too large a fire can cause an entire forest to burn. Be campfire safe!



MAKE YOUR CAMPFIRE SAFE



Build campfire away from overhanging branches, steep slopes, rotten stumps or logs, dry grass and leaves. Pile wood away from the fire.



Scrape away litter, duff, and any burnable material in a circle wide enough to keep a small campfire from spreading.



Keep water handy. Quick action will prevent fire spread to surrounding area.



Keep campfire small. A good bed of coals or small fire gives plenty of heat for cooking.



Never leave fire unattended. A breeze may come up while you're gone and spread the fire.

BE SURE YOUR MATCHES ARE OUT!

If your match is not to be thrown into a campfire, then be sure it's out! Hold until cold. Break it so that the charred portion is felt before discarding. Be sure it's *COLD OUT!*



HOW TO BE SURE YOUR CAMPFIRE IS OUT!

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1) Drown it with water. Make sure all embers, coals, and sticks are wet. Move rocks, there may be burning embers underneath.



2) Stir. Add more water and stir again. Be sure all burning material has been extinguished and cooled.



3) Feel all sticks and charred material. Feel the coals and ashes. Make sure no roots are burning.

No water? Use dirt. Mix enough soil or sand with embers and the fire will go out. Continue adding and stirring until all material is cold enough to feel with your bare hand. (Don't just bury it - it may smolder and break out again!)

CHARCOAL BRIQUETS

Dunk 'em! Don't sprinkle - put briquets in water and leave them until cold. Check with your hand to be sure they are out.



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TIPS ON BUILDING A CAMPFIRE



1. Start with dry twigs and small sticks.



2. Add larger sticks as fire builds up.



3. Put largest pieces of wood on last - be careful not to make a sudden shower of sparks.

4. To keep a good fire going, place large pieces of wood outside and gradually push into the flames.

Conserve your matches. (Carry a candle as a fire starter).

December 1974

Slightly revised January 1981

